DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 104 525 PS 007 734

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TITLE	Considerations Concerning Kindergarten Education: A Kindergarten Report and Position Paper.
INSTITUTION	Governor's Committee for Children and Youth, Jackson, Miss.
PUB DATE	20 Dec 73
NOTE	51p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.76 HC-$3.32 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	*Advisory Committees; Comparative Analysis; *Educational Assessment; *Educational Needs; *Kindergarten; State Legislation; *State Surveys
IDENTIFIERS	*Mississippi

ABSTRACT

This committee report and position paper recommends that a system of state public kindergartens should be established in Mississippi. Justification for public kindergartens is based on two major premises: (1) a belief that every child can benefit from quality kindergartens as they are described in this paper, and (2) a belief that kindergartens based on a child development philosophy could influence the traditional primary schools to provide more appropriate experiences for six-, seven-, and eight-year-olds. Specific recommendations for implementing public kindergartens are suggested: (1) passage of enabling legislation, (2) appropriation of funds for a selected number of kindergarten programs, (3) designation of responsibility for selection of initial kindergarten programs to the State Department of Education, and (4) appointment of a Supervisor of Early Childhood Education to act as kindergarten consultant to school districts. Appendixes include a listing of the kindergarten legislation from every state through 1974, and an outline of proposed kindergarten legislation in Mississippi from 1971 through 1974.

ED104525

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OCT. 24 1974

CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION

A KINDERGARTEN REPORT

AND

POSITION PAPER

Submitted to

Honorable William L. Waller

Governor of the State of Mississippi

December 20, 1973

by

The Governor's Committee for Children and Youth
Noel C. Womack, Jr. - Chairman

PS 007734

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CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION

Why Kindergartens in Mississippi?

There is a serious interest today in the consideration of kindergartens for Mississippi. Many people feel such an addition to the public school program could play a vital part in helping to develop children to their full human potential. This feeling is evidenced by the results of two recent surveys: the 1972 General Educational Needs Assessment Study of Mississippi, (Mississippi State Department of Education, Council for Planning and Evaluation, 1972) commissioned by the State Department of Education, and the Jackson Mississippi Students' Needs Assessment Study of April, 1972. (Educational Planning, Engineering and Auditing Incorporated, 1972)

Both studies have shown that the most urgent educational need in Mississippi is kindergarten. Many parents are realizing the value of rich experiences for their children during the early years. National reports and nationwide publicity are bringing this to their attention, and they are beginning to ask, "Why not kindergartens in Mississippi?"

Today many children are in pre-school programs, either private or federally funded. Because of economic position

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and lack of availability of Child Development Centers and kindergartens in some areas, however, not every parent has the option of choosing a formal pre-school experience for his child. Public school kindergarten would give every parent the opportunity of choice.

Robert McNair (1969), Governor of South Carolina, linked Early Childhood Education to the development of his state's total manpower resources. He stated:

> "The key to our whole future is our ability to better educate our preschool children. As we study statistics about ourselves, we can trace a great number of failures to the lack of preparation for many of our children before they reach the first grade. If a child's intellectual growth has been stunted before he is six years old, his chances of succeeding in our education system are, at best, weak. It is, therefore, absolutely essential that we establish a state kindergarten system in South Carolina." [p.8]

Statistics in Mississippi support Governor McNair's contention. Not only is there evidence of a loss of human potential resulting from the failure to accept educational responsibility sooner, but there may be an economic advantage to the state in establishing kindergarten education.

The 1971-72 statistics tell us that in Mississippi only 39.49 percent of those who began first grade finished the twelfth grade. (Mississippi State Department of Education, Division of Administration and Finance, 1971-72, p. 20). For the past four years an average of 1,005 students per year of the approximately 50,000 enrolled dropped out of first grade.

(Mississippi State Department of Education, Division of Administration and Finance, 1970-71, 1971-72, 1972-73). Most of these students will never return to school. Each year our first grade retention rate is over 13 percent. (Mississippi State Department of Education, Division of Administration and Finance, 1970-71, 1971-72, 1972-73). According to Dr. Robert Plants, Chairman of the Department of Elementary Education, University of Mississippi, (January 2[illegible] 1973) it costs our state over $3,000,000 annually to re-educate these first grade failures.

The children who become first grade dropouts (1,005) or who need early and continued remediation (6,500 first graders) will continue to become tax consumers and not tax producers.

Kindergartens could offer an alternative to remedial instruction by offering appropriate experiences for children at the time they are most needed. The new feelings of success fostered in children during the early years, would in turn, affect a decrease in the dropout rate--often a by-product of early defeat and frustration in an academic learning situation.

The 30,000 adult Mississippians as recorded by 1970 census (Mississippi State Department of Education, Division of Administration and Finance, 1971-72, p. 9) that have no school at all seems to justify the present emphasis on vocational and career education. However, it is doubtful in view of the

extremely low level communication skills that these people possess that they will ever be able to be involved in the vocational and/or career programs.

The cost-benefits of kindergarten programs have been recognized by many (White, 1972; Dunworth, 1968; Riles, 1972). In reality, the cost of education in the early years and again in the later adult years is often the most expensive. White (1972) points out:

> "Currently, we spend comparatively little public money on the education of children until they are six years of age. Subsequently, we tend to spend more and more each year as children move through the system. There is good reason to question the wisdom of this arrangement. It may turn out to be more sensible to invest heavily in the first years of a child's life and spend less as he moves through elementary and secondary education. Such a shift of resources would be sure to meet resistance, but I believe it is inevitable." [611-612]

The national average cost per pupil to operate an Early Childhood program is $841.53. (Governor's School Finance Study Group, 1973, pp. 7-8). The cost of providing extensive social services is included in this average. To set up a public school kindergarten with appropriate equipment, providing adequate space is available, the necessary expenditure would average approximately $3,000. (Evans, Shub, Weinstein, 1971, p. 251).

The operating expense afterward would be no more cost per pupil than the $417.46 state expenditure (Governor's School Finance Study Group, 1973, pp. 7-8) for the yearly education

of an elementary child. A suggested allocation for the first year, for one teacher unit, would be $12,000 with an annual $8,000 per year allotment thereafter.

When we compare the cost of initiating and maintaining a state kindergarten program with our present and accountable loss of educational funds due to first grade dropout and remediation needs, not to speak of the tremendous loss of human resources, the committee's question is an echo of the parent's question, "Why not kindergartens in Mississippi?"

What Do We Mean By Kindergarten Education?

Kindergarten education can be formally defined in two ways:

General definition: A kindergarten is any Early Childhood or pre-school program for 5-year-old children.

Professional definition: (Monroe, 1912) A kindergarten is an "institution for furthering the systematic development of children below the school age by the organization of their natural play instincts in accordance with the principles upon which development is based." [p. 598]

Kindergarten programs are developed from two basic philosophies: that of behaviorism and that of developmentalism. The behaviorists contend that childrens' behavior can be changed by prescribing a sequentially designed program and by reinforcing positive response until the desired action is received. These

programs are generally more structured and usually emphasize the academic skills. From the developmentalists philosophy a program is designed according to the child's total growth need and his own action on the environment. In this kind of program curriculum is generally flexible, open, and often extends from the interest of the children. In a program of the latter type the curriculum is suggestive, while in the first type the curriculum is prescriptive. Most kindergartens use some concepts from both.

This committee feels that a philosophy considering the development of the whole child should be the basis on which to build programs within Mississippi. The following principles of child development should be considered in planning kindergarten programs.

Child Development Principles[1]

1. A child learns as a total person. (emotionally, socially, physically, as well as intellectually)
2. Children grow through similar stages of development but at individual rates. (Activities must be planned for many levels of understanding.)
3. Children learn best when many senses are involved. (hearing, seeing, touching, tasting, smelling)
4. Children learn best by being actively involved. (exploring, playing, manipulating, problem solving)

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[1]For support of child development principles see: J. Piaget and B. Inhelder, 1969; E. Erikson, 1950; and A. Gesell, 1940.

5. The way a child receives information may be as significant to his learning as the information he receives. (methods, climate, atmosphere, teacher attitude)

6. Children learn in different ways. (Activities must be varied using many materials and approaches.)

Characteristics of a Good Kindergarten Program

A kindergarten developed from the above principles reflects the following characteristics:

1. Program: The instructional programs, designed to promote the child's optimal mental, physical, social and emotional development, are planned in accordance with the needs and developmental stages of the young child.

2. Curriculum: Daily plans are flexible and provide for a wide variety of activities designed to promote the child's ability to relate well to his peers and to adults. They emphasize self-expression rather than skill improvement, creation rather than memorization, and human warmth rather than mechanization.

3. Space: The facilities are spacious, safe, and functional. They provide a minimum indoor space of 35 sq. ft. per child. (Evans, Shub, Weinstein, 1971, pp. 7-8).

4. Personnel: The teacher is a fully functioning human being who respects, trusts, and values children and is able to plan according to their individual needs.

5. Equipment: Materials and equipment are numerous, manipulative, varied, easily accessible to children, and appropriate to their individual stages of development and their need for creative exploration.

6. Size: Groups are small enough to permit frequent interaction. The ideal group size is 1 teacher to 10 children. An acceptable size is 1 teacher to 15 or 20 children. (Evans, Shub, Weinstein, 1971, pp. 7-8).

Goals for Kindergarten Education

In determining the types of programs and experiences appropriate for the five-year-old child, these realistic goals for kindergarten education should be considered.

To help the child:

1. to develop a positive self-concept.
2. to achieve intellectual growth as shown by maturation of thinking processes.
3. to enlarge his world of people, experiences, ideas, and things.
4. to increase competency and skills in communication.
5. to increase the skills involved in physical coordination and body mastery.
6. to increase competence in dealing with emotional feelings and social situations.
7. to increase competence in self-direction and independence.
8. to develop trusting relationships.
9. to develop his natural curiosity and his creative potential.

Charles Silberman (1970) has stated in his book Crisis in the Classroom that he was wrong about tomorrow's need for masses of intellectuals, and that what tomorrow needs is "masses of educated men--men educated to feel and to act as well as to think." [p. 7] Silberman, then, contended that education must be of the kind that does more than insure intellectual or cognitive growth. With the acceleration of knowledge and the

rapidity of change in today's world, such writers as Alvin Toffler (1970, pp. 366-371) in Future Shock have suggested that education must take place in three crucial realms: learning, relating, and choosing. It is essential that education of the very young be balanced with experiences designed to generate growth and development in all areas--physical, mental, social, and emotional.

What Can Kindergartens Contribute to Education?

The following conclusions from research studies indicate that Early Childhood Education produces positive results:

1. Intelligence is not "fixed", but deprivation of positive experience between the optimum ages 4 to 6 years can retard and limit educational achievement.

2. Academic achievement in language usage and mathematical understanding are positively correlated with formal pre-school education.

3. Kindergarten experience fosters positive attitudes and habits in children.

4. Because of the formal "bringing together" of children for pre-school education, many behavior and learning problems are detected.

5. The kindergarten provides a screening-ground for physical and emotional problems and early treatment of such problems.

6. General social and emotional adjustment are facilitated by early childhood education.

Review of the research:[2] More has been written on the benefits and needs of pre-school education during the last few years than ever before (Bloom, 1964; Lazerson, 1972; Mason, 1972; Mindess and Keliher, 1967; Gardner, 1972; Combs, 1972). Bloom (1964) in his research on the stability of achievement, points out that ..."17% of the growth (in educational achievement) takes place between ages 4 and 6..." [p. 88] and in terms of stability and intelligence, "about 50% of the development takes place between conception and ages 4 and 8, and about 20% between ages 8 and 17." [p. 110]

Studies related to pre-school experiences for culturally disadvantaged children have shown significant differences favoring the experimental groups who had had pre-school experiences over control groups who had not (Burgess, 1965; Deutsch, 1963; Bonney, 1956). Murphy (1966) reported in the Lesley College Kindergarten Conference Proceedings that children in the third grade who had had a planned program of auditory and visual experience with letter names and sounds in kindergarten were superior in arithmetic and reading to children who had not had the program. Fuller (1961) and Haines (1960), in earlier studies, supported the findings of kindergarten children surpassing non-kindergarten children in arithmetic skills.

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[2]The research section of this paper is now "in press." B. Cage and P. Emerson, "The Status of Kindergartens." Research in Education Bulletin, vol. 7, no. 1, November, 1973.

A substantial amount of research comparing the achievement of first grade children who attended kindergarten experience (Arkin, 1964; Burgess, 1965; Geedy, 1956; Haines, 1960; Trusal, 1955; Holey, et. al, 1963; Meyers, 1963). In only one area, that of reading, are there inconclusive results. Smith (1964) reported a summary of 58 reports and statements on early reading. Her conclusions were that: (1) the organized teaching of reading in kindergartens was not effective in contributing to reading maturation and (2) kindergarten teachers could better spend their time providing children abundant contacts with reading symbols in meaningful situations rather than trying to teach reading from a basal reader.

A substantial amount of research has been done on the change in the measure of intelligence of children who have had kindergarten or pre-school experience (Almy, 1964; Bloom, 1964; Mindess and Keliher, 1967; Wann, et. al., 1962). Almy (1964) states

> "...intelligence, rather than being fixed by genetic factors at birth, emerges as it is nurtured. Each stage of development carries with it possibilities for the acquisition of new abilities, new ways of processing information. Unless each of these abilities is sufficiently exercised as it emerges, it will not develop fully and it will contribute little if at all to the demands of the next stage." [p. 12]

Gray and Klause (1970) reported on their longitudinal study of an early training project involving a preschool

intervention program. The experimental and control children were studied and tested from 1962 to 1968 through their completion of the fourth grade. Throughout the study the experimental children remained significantly superior to the control children on the intelligence tests. Vocabulary and achievement differences were found to significantly favor the experimental children in both the first and second grades. The three tests used in this comprehensive study were the Stanford-Binet, Peabody Picture Vocabulary test, and the Metropolitan Achievement test.

Conway, et. al. (1968), in a study of 22,000 elementary school children in Canada, indicated that at the end of grades 1, 2, and 3 I. Q.'s were highest for children who had had kindergarten attendance compared to those who did not. They also indicated that kindergarten attendance was related to higher achievement in reading comprehension, word meaning, spelling, and arithmetic at grade 2.

Sister Pineault (1967), in her study at Cornell University, concluded,

> "This research leads us to conclude that children who have attended kindergarten have advantage in I. Q. gains, as measured by the PPVT, over those children who have not had such experience. Furthermore, it substantiates the findings that kindergarten is of greater help to children from lower socio-economic classes, whereas children from upper classes enter kindergarten with higher I. Q.'s and therefore improve less than their lower level classmates." [p. 95]

Gardner (1972) extended the general concept of "kindergarten experience" for five-year-olds when he stated that the research "...consistently indicates that kindergarten-educated children tend to be superior to non-kindergarten-educated children in traits related to good attitudes and habits." [p. 11] Shaw (1957) reported that both public pre-school experience and private pre-school experience were found to make significantly greater contributions to social adjustments of first grade children than did no organized pre-school experience. The behavior of kindergarten age children is more easily modified and guided than that of children at later ages (Chamberlin and Nader, 1971). Also, most behavior and learning problems begin to appear at this age; thus, they are more easily dealt with and treated than at a later age. The skills learned in the structural setting of a kindergarten class are readily transformed to and become a part of the child's social behavior outside the classroom (Altman, 1971). The kindergarten classroom provides many and varied experiences to five-year-olds that cannot be attained elsewhere.

Another argument for kindergartens has been established by professionals in the area of medicine and psychology (Ferenden and Jacobsen, 1970; Etaugh and Van Sickle, 1971; Biber, 1968). By having five-year-olds in school, screening for physical, emotional, and behavioral problems can be accomplished earlier than currently done in first grade. From

four to nine percent of elementary children exhibit symptoms of developmental speech and language disorders (Wyatt, 1965). The earlier these can be detected and treated, the more readily the child can adapt to the school learning environment.

A three year research project conducted by the United States Public Health Service and the Boston Department of Health and Hospitals found that eyes develop fully around the age of six years (U.S. Public Health Service, 1967). Lazy eye blindness, which develops earlier, can only be helped if it is detected before eyes are fully developed.

De Hirsch, Jansky, and Langford (1966) showed in their study of perceptual motor and language behavior that "valid prediction of reading, spelling, and writing achievement can be made by evaluating children's perceptual motor and language behavior in early years," [p. 7] and that many "intelligent but educationally disabled children ... would not have required help had their difficulties been recognized at early ages. Early identification would have allievated the need for later remedial measures." [p. 92] Weiner (1973) further supports early screening and has demonstrated its value in determining unsuspected learning problems.

Kindergarten's place: One of the recent arguments raised against existing kindergartens is that it is a separate form of

educational program and therefore should not be a part of the regular 1-12 program (Spodek, 1973). Most research does not support this concept (Headley, 1966; Dunworth, 1968; Mindess and Deliher, 1967). Almost all existing public school kindergartens are housed in the same facility with elementary school classes, with kindergarten teachers being an integral part of the elementary school faculty. Directors of pre-service and in-service training for teachers naturally include kindergarten teachers in all aspects of curriculum planning for the elementary school. The purpose of kindergarten is often defeated if it is conducted separate and apart from the regular school program.

Kindergartens have been strongly supported for their usefulness in helping five-year-olds make a successful transition from home to school (Hymes, 1970; Beyer, 1968; Masry, 1972; and Berson, 1959). The first year of school is often a traumatic experience for some children. Going from an unstructured learning situation in the home to a highly structured first grade classroom can create anxieties and learning problems that may be difficult to overcome in the future. This was evidenced in part in Mississippi during the 1972-73 school year when 13 percent of the first graders were not promoted and another 1.54 percent dropped out before the end of the year. (Mississippi Department of Education, Division of Administration and Finance, 1970-71, 1971-72, 1972-73). The social warmth of a kindergarten

classroom has contributed to the growth in social maturity for many five-year-olds. Peltonen (1965) has been deeply concerned about the educational climate of kindergarten classrooms and concludes:

> "This century has been called a children's century. More than ever it has been perceived that by directing care and love toward children we are building a better future for the whole world. A happy and secure childhood is the best basis for future life." [p. 246]

The social behavior of young children is shaped predominantly in the early years. Five-year-olds, when not influenced overwhelmingly by adults, see very little or no difference between race and socio-economic groups. The kindergarten classroom provides an excellent location for social behavior to be molded and grow (Altman, 1971; Hilton, 1972; Garner, 1972). The many differences and prejudices held by adults are often transferred to young children, both consciously and unconsciously. Social integration in the structured setting of a pre-school classroom would tend to alleviate learned or inferred social prejudices. As Flint (1970) has stated,

> "Past failures to educate socially and culturally deprived children have indicated the need for a new look... Nothing could be lost and perhaps much could be gained by cutting down failures both in academic achievement and in human resources." [p. 425]

What critics have to say: This review of pertinent literature would not be complete without a look at criticism raised in recent years about early childhood education. One of the most formative critiques, "The California Report: Early School For All?" (Moore, et. al., 1972) seriously questions formal schooling for children four years of age and under. The authors are critical of the recommendations brought forth in the "Report of the Task Force on Early Childhood Education," State Board of Education, Sacremento, California (1971). The California Study recommended academic schooling be provided at public expense to all children four years of age and older. Moore, et. al., proposes that not enough research has been done with four-year-olds on a longitudinal basis to justify formalized schooling for this age child and cites research that (1) criticizes early school entrants, (2) relates how brain maturation effects learning at various levels and (3) describes the effects of maternal deprivation on young children. It is important to note that Moore, et. al., do not mention "kindergarten" or "five-year-olds" in their discussion as kindergarten is already a mandatory part of the California public school system.

Two subsequent reports, "The Real California Report: A New Approach to Education" by Elizabeth Lewis (1973) and "To Search But Not To Find: Further Observations on Early Childhood Education" by Vera C. Taylor (1973), provide

significant rebuttals to Moore, et. al. Lewis (1973) points out "...most specialists differ from the Moores in the way they view the field of early childhood and, more specifically, in their interpretation of the California Childhood Education Report." [p. 558] She further contends that opponents of early childhood education: (1) interpret schooling as the kind of academic education conducted in most elementary schools today, and (2) cite research data on maternal deprivation secured in institutional settings and apply it to the short-term mother/child separations that occur when a child goes to school. Lewis agrees with the Moores that "too-much-too-young" is not good and reiterates that the California Report recommends a "...positively reinforcing environment where optimal learning and development can take place." [p. 559] The California plan is an attempt to have the schools supplement the home, not take the place of it.

In the second article mentioned above, Taylor (1973) severly criticizes Moore, et. al., for not documenting several sweeping generalizations. Also, Taylor points out that the evidence supplied by Moore to compare relative classroom achievement was based on first graders, not pre-schoolers as Moore, et. al., had indicated.

Taylor (1973) continues with her argument that much of the Moore's documentation is not relevant to the Early Childhood Program proposed for California and states,

> "Of the nine researchers alluded to in Moore's first Kappan article, seven are cited in the Congressional Record version. Of them, four are studies of infant programs, two are analysis of foreign day care and children's homes, and one is a study of foster children! None of these is comparable to a three-or-four-hour enriched pre-school program with a parent involvement component. None relates accurately to the question at hand." [pp. 33-34]

Christofer Jencks (1972), in his book Inequality, A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America, makes the statement that "Pre-schools have little permanent effect on cognitive development." [p. 89] He further states, however,

> "Within any given school there were dramatic achievement differences between those children who had attended kindergarten and those who had not. Black sixth graders who said they had attended kindergarten scored ahead of black sixth graders who said they had not been in kindergarten. This was true in all the EEOS sixth grade tests, even after socio-economic differences between kindergarteners and non-kindergarteners had been taken into account." [p. 120]

Jencks continues, "There was a similar gap between white kindergarten alumni and nonalumni on the verbal test, though the difference on the reading and math tests was much smaller." [p. 120] These seemingly opposing conclusions are perhaps explained as follows:

1. When students in schools across states or regions were compared, little or no differences existed between those students who had had some type of pre-school experience with those who had not when socio-economic factors were considered, and

2. When students within a school system or school district who had had a kindergarten experience were compared with those who had not, differences favoring kindergarten alumni were almost always significant, regardless of socio-economic background.

A major thrust of Jenck's (1972) study was the reevaluation of the data collected and analyzed in the Coleman Report (1966). One of the major critics of the Coleman Report has been Henry Levin (1968). Levin has pointed out rather conclusively that: (1) differences on per pupil expenditures between schools in the same districts were ignored, (2) a much higher proportion of non-whites were used in the sample than the population to which the findings were inferred, (3) the statistical analysis used (multiple regression) forced in background variables first for their accounting of variance in achievement and then school variables were entered for their additional contribution to variance, and (4) the variables used to control background factors were so highly correlated with other variables being adjusted that school effects were largely removed.

Although each of those criticisms is valid, they do not deny Jenck's conclusion about kindergartens within a school system or school district. Regardless of race or socio-economic background, kindergarten alumni in a given school district performed better in school achievement than did non-kindergarten alumni.

Gutherie (1972), in his Saturday Review article "What

the Coleman Reanalysis Didn't Tell Us," pointed out that different statistical treatments with the Coleman data have demonstrated that schools can have a significant impact upon students. Gutherie further stated that neither the Coleman Report nor the Harvard seminar papers (Mosteller and Moynihan, 1972) should be used in the public policy arena.

The research to date supports the concept of early childhood education. It especially emphasizes the importance of kindergarten for five-year-olds.

What Progress Have Other States Made In Enacting Kindergarten Legislation?

Presently only five states remain that do not have a state supported kindergarten program. As seen in Appendix A, they are the states of Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, and Oregon.

In Fall, 1971, 2,483,000 children in the United States attended public kindergarten or some form of pre-school program financed by Federal, state, or local funds. (U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, 1971, p. 6). Several states in the Southeast have recently accepted the responsibility for public kindergartens. (See Appendix A for complete statistics on states.)

What Initiative Have the People Shown in Meeting the Need for Early Childhood Education in Mississippi?

Some children in Mississippi are in programs for five-year-olds which are either private or federally funded. It is estimated that about 427 five-year-olds attend private kindergartens. (Governor's Committee on Children and Youth, 1970, p. 17). According to the State Department of Education statistics federal moneys have supported several kindergarten programs in the public schools. These programs and the number of children they serve are listed below (R. Thompson, telephone interview, September, 1973):

1971-72

Natchez	80
Alcorn	98
Enterprise	28
Forrest	7
Meridian	358
Drew	68
New Albany	189
	828

Other federally funded programs such as Head Start have provided centers for children under six. Head Start serves an average of 30,000 three-five-year-olds annually. Recent Appalachian Commission money was granted to the State Child Development Council, and several child development centers have been established.

The first legislation in Mississippi was introduced by Senators B. G. Perry and Perrin Purvis in the regular 1971

session. The bill died in Senate committee. Seven subsequent bills met similar fates. A summary of legislative action from 1971-73 in the area Early Childhood Education is presented in Appendix B.

Conferences have been held throughout the state to discuss the pros and cons of public school kindergartens. In June, 1973, the State Department of Education and the Governor's Office of Education and Training held such a conference for State Superintendents of Education. The Mississippi Committee on the Humanities has funded six regional conferences to discuss kindergarten education. These meetings were held during September and October, 1973, at statewide educational centers.

Where does this Committee Stand With Regard to Kindergarten Legislation?

This committee supports and encourages the establishment of state public school kindergartens and would strongly favor legislation based on a phasing-in process. We support public kindergartens for two reasons:

1. We believe every child can benefit from quality kindergartens as they have been described in this paper

2. We believe kindergartens based on a child development philosophy could influence the traditional primary schools to provide more appropriate experiences for six, seven and eight year olds.

We suggest beginning implementation on a small basis because kindergarten is a very special education undertaking.

APPENDICES

The information in the Appendices has been updated since being presented to Governor Waller in 1973.

APPENDIX A

STATE LEGISLATION RELATING TO KINDERGARTENS[3]

State	Legal Entrance Age	State Legislation and Funding
Alabama	5 by start of school	Enacted a law empowering county boards of education to establish and maintain kindergartens and playgrounds. $500,000 has been allotted for eight Early Childhood Education Pilot Programs which are funded by a special education trust fund.
Alaska	5 by Nov. 2	State aid provided to kindergarten as part of state foundation program at one-half amount for elementary school pupils. Transportation costs are included.
Arizona[d]	5 by Jan. 1	Enacted a $4.5 million kindergarten program. Law paves way for one-half ADA funds for new kindergartens (Excluded from 6 percent budget limit for first year) and same state funds for existing kindergartens (not excluded from 6 percent limit). Requires all districts to have kindergartens unless an exemption claim is filed annually.

a - Legislation enacted in 1968
b - Legislation enacted in 1969
c - Legislation enacted in 1970
d - Legislation enacted in 1971
e - Legislation enacted in 1972

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[3]Data in this appendix reflects legislation through 1974. Information updated by University of Mississippi Bureau of Educational Research.

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APPENDIX A (continued)

State	Legal Entrance Age	State Legislation and Funding
Arkansas[b]	5 by Oct. 1	Authorizes local school districts to incorporate a program of kindergarten education for five-year-old children as part of over-all program; provides that state board of education shall promulgate rules and regulations providing minimum standards. Maximum allocation is $9,000.00 for a full day program; $4,500.00 for one-half day program per classroom unit. State aid as part of foundation program - ADA
California	4 yrs. 9 mo. by Sept. 1	Required for accreditation but not required by statute. State aid as part of foundation program.
Colorado	5 by Sept. 15	Aid provided as part of foundation program which includes transportation costs.
Connecticut	5 by start of school	The state board of education was directed to establish uniform rules relative to establishment of kindergarten in the local school districts. Provided $530,000 for public kindergartens for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1969. Now a part of foundation project and all districts had kindergartens in operation by 1971.
Delaware[a]	5 by Jan. 1	

a - Legislation enacted in 1968
e - Legislation enacted in 1972

APPENDIX A (continued)

State	Legal Entrance Age	State Legislation and Funding
Florida[a]	5 by Jan. 1	Beginning July 1, 1968, the public schools shall provide 13 consecutive years of instruction, starting with kindergarten. Kindergartens were implemented on a statewide basis in annual increments so that all children were served by 1973.
Georgia[e]	5 by Jan. 1	Funds for a limited early childhood education program (kindergarten) were appropriated. This was a first step toward state-wide kindergartens.
Hawaii	5 by Dec. 31	98.2 per cent of five-year-old population of 16,817 are enrolled in kindergartens, both public and private. Only 2,615 of them attend private programs. Program totally state funded.
Idaho	none	A kindergarten bill has been introduced which, if passed, would provide 100 per cent state supported permissive kindergarten programs. Governor and State Superintendent of Public Instruction support it. At present there are 35 kindergarten programs operating with local and federal funds.

a - Legislation enacted in 1968
e - Legislation enacted in 1972

APPENDIX A (continued)

State	Legal Entrance Age	State Legislation and Funding
Illinois	5 by Dec. 1	State aid as part of regular school reimbursement program. Maximum per pupil dollar based on equalization formula.
Indiana	5 by start of school	Kindergartens are provided state funds through State Department of Public Instruction within public school grant on half-day per capita basis.
Iowa	5 by Dec. 31	State aid provided through foundation program. State Department of Public Instruction provides leadership in upgrading kindergarten programs through consultative services and inservice workshops.
Kansas	5 by Sept. 1	State aid provided as part of foundation program counted as one-half regular student. Transportation costs included in state aid.
Kentucky[e]	5 by Dec. 31	Operation of kindergartens during 1973-74 and subsequent years authorized through the foundation program under regulations of the state board of education (SB 289); 100 kindergarten classroom units funded for 1973-74 (HB 335).

e - Legislation enacted in 1972

APPENDIX A (continued)

State	Legal Entrance Age	State Legislation and Funding
Louisiana	4.8 years	State aid on same basis as for grades 1 - 12. Teachers supplied on a 28 to 1 ratio.
Maine	5 by Oct. 15	Aid as part of state foundation program.
Maryland	5 by start of school	Enacted a provision that full kindergarten programs be implemented in the counties by September, 1973.
Massachusetts	4.8 years	State aid provided as part of foundation program.
Michigan	5 by Dec. 1	State aid provided as part of foundation program.
Minnesota	5 by Sept. 1	State aid provided as part of foundation program. Kindergarten pupil counted as 1/2 a pupil enrolled in another grade.
MISSISSIPPI	5 by Dec. 1	NO STATE AID - SEE A
Missouri	5 by Oct. 1	Foundation program aid for kindergarten is based upon one-half of the total days attended by kindergarten children.
Montana	5 by start of school	No state aid.
Nebraska	5 by Oct. 15	State aid as part of foundation program, based on ADM.
Nevada	5 by Dec. 31	State aid provided through foundation program.

APPENDIX A (continued)

State	Legal Entrance Age	State Legislation and Funding
New Hampshire	Local option	State aid as part of foundation program to those districts which qualify.
New Jersey	5 by Oct. 1	State aid as part of foundation program for 4 and 5 year olds.
New Mexico	5 by Jan. 1	No state aid.
New York	4.9 by Sept. 1	In 1969-70, $604 per child for full day; $302 per child per year for one-half day as part of foundation program including transportation costs.
North Carolina[d]	5 by Oct. 16	State funds were provided for 18 model development programs on two year basis in 1970. State at 25 percent of need level by Sept., 1971. Aid provided as part of regular state support program. $3 million in new funds appropriated for expansion of state kindergarten system in 1972.
North Dakota	5 by start of school	No state aid.
Ohio	5 by Sept. 30	State aid for kindergartens provided through state foundation program.
Oklahoma[b]	5 by Nov. 1	State aid provided as part of foundation program amount based on ADA. Provided additional appropriation of $1,600,000 for kindergarten program in 1970. Also provided for free kindergarten with districts having programs at present to receive 60 percent of one-day average daily attendance, and districts

b - Legislation enacted in 1969
d - Legislation enacted in 1971

APPENDIX A (continued)

State	Legal Entrance Age	State Legislation and Funding
		with kindergartens for first time to receive 100 percent in 1971-72; in 1974-75 all districts shall receive 75 percent ADA for kindergarten and such program shall be mandatory.
Oregon	5 by Nov. 15	State aid provided as part of the foundation program.
Pennsylvania	4 years	School districts receive reimbursement for instruction from the Department of Education at the same rate for kindergarten as for any other grade level.
Rhode Island	5 by Dec. 31	State aid as part of foundation program.
South Carolina[b]	5 by Nov. 1	Not part of foundation program. Annual grants to State Department for pilot program. $500,000 in both 1969-70 and 1970-71. Legislative effort to expand state-wide kindergarten education in 1972 partially achieved.
South Dakota	5 by Nov. 1	State aid under same minimum foundation grant as grades 1 - 12.
Tennessee	5 by Oct. 31	11.3 million dollars appropriated in 1974, 17.1 million in 1975. State aid as part of the minimum foundation program.

b - Legislation enacted in 1969

APPENDIX A (continued)

State	Legal Entrance Age	State Legislation and Funding
Texas	5.5 by Sept. 1	State aid provided in Sept., 1970, first to "educationally handicapped," then to preschool.
Utah	5 by start of school	State aid as part of foundation program. Utah now has kindergarten in all but 2 small rural districts.
Vermont	5 by start of school	State aid funds provided as part of over-all state aid given school districts.
Virginia	5 by Sept. 30	State aid as part of foundation program. Removal of statutory restriction of a minimum kindergarten program enrollment for third-class districts before a kindergarten program can be offered. All school districts allowed to conduct a full-year kindergarten program on the basis of 90 full days instead of 180 half days. (Ch. 105, Ex. Sess. 1972).
Washington	5 by start of school	State aid as part of foundation program.
West Virginia[d]	5 by start of school	Adoption for the first time of a statewide mandated early childhood education program, to go into full effect by the 1972-73 school year. Requires all counties to establish such programs for all 5-year olds but counties may include

d - Legislation enacted in 1971

APPENDIX A (continued)

State	Legal Entrance Age	State Legislation and Funding
		children below the age of 5. Another feature of the legislation sets up an appropriation for establishing regional early childhood education demonstration centers for experimental and innovative early childhood education programs. State cost of the program is set at $3.5 million.
Wisconsin	5 by Dec. 1	State funds as part of foundation program at rate of one-half membership per enrollee.
Wyoming	5 by Sept. 15	State aid as part of foundation program. Fifty half-day students in ADM entitled to one "classroom unit" of $11,800 (1971-72).

APPENDIX B

KINDERGARTEN LEGISLATION

YEAR	BILL NUMBER	TYPE	SUGGESTED FUNDING	AGES	SCOPE	DISPOSITION
1971	Senate Bill 1585	Permissive	Full state funding including transportation	5-yr.-olds	Full state participation (no pilots)	Died in Senate Committee
1972	Senate Bill 1593	Permissive	Full state funding $1500 per unit for equipment $15,000 for statewide administration	5-yr.-olds	Pilot participation. One unit per school district after state dept. approval.	Died in Senate Committee and in House Committee
1972	House Bill 1250	Permissive	Funding from local sources only.	4-6 yr.-olds	Full state participation but districts must receive state dept. approval	Failed to Pass the House
1972	House Bill 410	Permissive	Provided for distribution of set amount of state funds based on a pro-rated ADA formula. NOT full state funding.	4-6 yr.-olds	Full state participation but districts must receive state dept. approval	Died on House Calendar
1973	Senate Bill 1638	Permissive	1/2 state funding. $1500 per unit for equipment	5-yr.-olds	No pilot program. Any district may establish a program based upon approval of the state dept.	Died in Senate Committee
1973	House Bill 47	Permissive	Funding from local sources only.	4-6 yr.-olds	Full state participation with state dept. approval.	Died in House Committee

APPENDIX B
(continued)

KINDERGARTEN LEGISLATION CONTINUED

YEAR	BILL NUMBER	TYPE	SUGGESTED FUNDING	AGES	SCOPE	DISPOSITION
1973	House Bill 469	Permissive	Provided for distribution of set amount of state funds based on a pro-rated ADA formula. NOT full state funding.	4-6 yr. olds	Full state participation with state dept. approval.	Died in House Committee
1973	House Bill 1082	Permissive	State funding to approved school districts from set amount appropriated by the legislature to be distributed by the Office of Early Childhood Education.	5-year-olds	Creation of the Office of Early Childhood in the Division of Instruction-State Dept. of Ed. Full state participation but districts must receive approval from the Office of Early Childhood Education.	Died in House Committee
1974	Senate Bill 1768	Permissive	Full state funding including transportation	5-year-olds	Reduced ADA for grades 1-3 or kindergarten	Died in Committee
1974	House Bill 369	Permissive	Full state funding including transportation	5-year-olds	Reduced ADA for grades 1-3 or kindergarten	Amended on floor to remove kindergarten section

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SUMMARY

Why Kindergarten In Mississippi?

National and state surveys and research studies have brought a new focus on the needs of the young child.

1. Two state surveys (the State Education Department's 1972 General Educational Needs Assessment Study of Mississippi and the Jackson, Mississippi, Students' Needs Assessment Study) indicate that parents in the state think that kindergartens are the number one educational priority.

2. Governor Robert McNair of South Carolina has linked kindergarten education to the development of his state's total manpower resources.

3. Only 39.49% of Mississippi children beginning first grade finish the 12th grade.

4. An average of 1,005 Mississippians drop out of first grade each year.

5. Mississippi's first grade retention rate is over 13% each year.

6. It costs our state about $3,000,000 annually to re-educate the first-grade failures.

Implications of such research may be summarized as follows:

1. New alternatives to education as we now envisage it in our state need to be sought.

2. Kindergartens could offer one alternative to remedial instruction by offering appropriate educational experiences for children at the time they are most needed.

3. Successful experiences early could affect the drop-out rate.

4. White (1972) suggested that we should shift resources from spending less money on older children and adults and invest it sooner and for children under six. (30,000 Mississippians have no schooling at all and never reach career development programs.

What is the Cost of a Kindergarten Program?

1. Initial cost for one teacher unit--$12,000
2. Cost for providing space is in addition to the above.
3. Appropriate equipment--$3,000
4. Teacher and teacher's aide--$8,000-$9,000

What Do We Mean By Kindergarten Education?

A kindergarten is a controlled group environment designed to take optimum advantage of the developmental characteristics of children below school-age in order that they might fully develop their human potential. The aim of the kindergarten program---to fully develop human potential---is the aim of all formal education. The method employed by the kindergarten---evolving a program that suits the "developmental characteristics" of the children involved---is one that is now recognized in all phases of formal education and one that is especially essential in the primary grades. The kindergarten, then, is the initial phase of a planned educational environment designed to take advantage of the knowledge we have of children and of the learning process.

The general characteristics of children are:

1. A child learns as a total person. (emotionally, socially, physically, as well as intellectually)

2. Children grow through similar stages of development but at individual rates. (Activities must be planned for many levels of understanding.)

3. Children learn best when many senses are involved. (hearing, seeing, touching, tasting, smelling)

4. Children learn best by being actively involved. (exploring, playing, manipulating, problem solving)

5. The way a child receives information may be as significant to his learning as the information he receives. (methods, climate, atmosphere, teacher attitude)

6. Children learn in different ways. (Activities must be varied using many materials and approaches.)

The characteristics of kindergarten children are:

1. All those characteristics shared with children of all ages as inumerated above.

2. Many are beginning to move from thinking on a totally concrete level (a level completely dependent on sensory manipulation) to thinking in beginning abstraction.

3. Most 5-year-olds are ready for independent self-directed exploration and for initial group experiences.

4. Most 5-year-olds are discovering themselves physically--primarily through large muscle activity.

5. Most 5-year-olds are learning to identify themselves as unique individuals capable of decisive action.

The characteristics of a kindergarten program taking into consideration the characteristics of the children involved are:

1. A flexible curriculum emphasizing:

   a) time for independent self-initiated activity
   b) time for small group participation
   c) time for creative and expressive activity
   d) time for outdoor physical activity

2. Adequate space and equipment including:

   a) 35 square feet per child indoor space (with spaces designed for independent exploration, for small and large group activities, for expressive activity, and for free indoor movement)

   b) 75 square feet per child out-door space (including spaces and equipment designed for non-locomotor activities---swinging, building, sitting, dreaming, throwing, etc.; and spaces and equipment designed for locomotor activities---climbing, running, walking, rolling, etc.)

   c) Varied types of manipulative sensory materials accessible to children and adaptable to multi-type use.

3. Quality personnel:

   a) A teacher interested in children and in early childhood principles, with professional experience in early childhood education.

   b) 1 adult for every 10 children (a teacher and an aide), with no more than 20 children per unit.

What Can Kindergarten Contribute to Education?

The following conclusions from research studies indicate that Early Childhood education produces positive results:

1. Intelligence is not "fixed", but deprivation of positive experience between the optimum ages 4 to 6 years can retard and limit educational achievement.

2. Academic achievement in language usage and mathematical understanding are positively correlated with formal pre-school education.

3. Kindergarten experience fosters positive attitudes and habits in children.

4. Because of the formal "bringing together" of children for pre-school education, many behavior and learning problems are detected.

5. The kindergarten provides a screening-ground for physical and emotional problems and early treatment of such problems.

What Do Critics Have To Say?

1. California report (Moore, 1972)

   This report seriously questions the formal education of children under four. It does not discuss five-year-olds.

2. Lewis (1973)

   Opponents of early childhood education interpret schooling as the kind of academic education conducted in most elementary schools today--while early childhood education offers another kind of experience. (Kindergarten supplements the home, not takes the place of the home.)

3. Jencks (1972)

   In his book, Inequality: A reassessment of the effect of family and schooling in America, Jencks reported that over-all pre-schools have little permanent effect on cognitive development, but within any given school there were dramatic achievement differences between those children who had attended kindergarten and those who had not.

What Progress Have Other States Made In Enacting Kindergarten Legislation?

1. Only the states of Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, and Oregon do not have a state supported kindergarten program. (Appendix A page 25)

2. Statistics for Fall, 1971, showed that 2,483,000 children in the United States attended some form of pre-school program financed by Federal, state, or local funds.

3. Several Southeastern states have recently begun public kindergartens: Alabama 1971, Georgia 1972, Kentucky 1972, and West Virginia 1971.

What Initiative Have People Shown In Meeting The Needs For Early Childhood Education in Mississippi?

1. Numbers of children are enrolled in programs for young children.

   a) Private kindergarten--427
   b) Federal title programs for five-year-olds in public school--828
   c) Head Start program for three-five-year-old--30,000

2. Conferences on the question of kindergarten education have been held.

   a) June 1973--Department of Education and Office of Education and Training---Superintendents and Administrators.

   b) September 1973---Governor's Conference on Education--Laymen and educators discussed pros and cons of kindergarten.

   c) October 1973---Six regional conferences---held in six regions of the state to discuss pros and cons of kindergarten.

Where Does This Committee Stand With Regard To Kindergarten Legislation?

This committee supports and encourages the establishment of state public school kindergartens and would strongly favor legislation based on a phasing-in process. We support public kindergartens for two reasons:

1. We believe every child can benefit from quality kindergartens as they are described in this paper.
2. We believe kindergartens based on a child development philosophy could influence the traditional primary schools to provide more appropriate experiences for six, seven and eight year olds.

The Committee also suggests beginning implementation on a small basis, because kindergarten is a very special educational undertaking. We make the following specific recommendations:

1. Passage of enabling legislation
2. Appropriation of funds for a selected number of kindergarten programs.
3. Designation of responsibility for selection of initial kindergarten programs to the State Department of Education. (Selection could be made using criteria developed by a committee of professional early childhood educators and lay citizens.)
4. Appointment of a Supervisor of Early Childhood Education to act as kindergarten consultant to school districts.

As a final recommendation this committee encourages the Governor to make a public committment to kindergarten education. The Governor's leadership and his reputation as a spokesman for the people could convince the legislature that the time has come to answer the question... "When will we have kindergartens in Mississippi?"...with a resounding... "NOW!!!"